3: Chinnery G, E-5 (1929) 1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10

Notes on the Study of the Native Population of the East Coast of New Ireland.

114 From time to time during the past twenty years various writers in official and scientific publications have drawn attention to the depopulation that is alleged to be taking place in many parts of Melanesia, including the Territories of Papua and New Guinea governed by Australia—the former as an integral part of the Commonwealth, and the latter under Mandate from the League of Nations. The decline has been attributed to various reasons, and numerous methods for arresting it have been suggested. The authorities do not always agree as to the relative importance of the processes of destruction and restoration outlined for consideration, nor do they produce for examination any comprehensive statistical data on which conditions of the past can be compared with the position to-day. This is especially marked in the discussions on the Mandated Territory of New Guinea, which appear to have been based either on the tables of population appearing from time to time in the Annual Reports (both German and British), or on special investigations of a preliminary nature for which no reliable material has been available for comparing present results with the conditions that existed in past years.

648 659 We hear from persons of long residence, however, that the inhabitants of certain districts now number considerably less than they did in former times, and in some cases these statements are supported to a certain extent by the population tables, compiled from time to time by District Officers on patrol; in other cases so brought to notice, however, the population in some districts appears to be stationary, and in others to be definitely increasing. During the last two or three years most of the missions operating in the Territory have sent yearly returns of births and deaths to the Department of Native Affairs, and these have assisted the Administration to keep in touch with conditions in the areas concerned.

648 It is the expressed policy of the Government of New Guinea to do all things possible to further the moral and material welfare of the natives of the Territory, and for some years the departmental officials charged with the execution of this policy, e.g., the staff in Native Affairs, District Administration, Agriculture, Health, and other departments, have extended their organizations as widely as the means at their disposal would allow, to meet the ever increasing obligations undertaken by the

[p. 3] [p. 1 & 2 contain no text]

648 Government. Activities for the moral and material welfare of the native peoples embrace a wide range of administrative functions, such as the penetration, pacification and control of hostile districts, the institution of law and order, the establishment of schools, enumeration of the population, the inspection and protection of native labour, medical patrols, the mapping of morbidity areas, the training and appointment of native medical assistants, village hygiene, the establishment of hospitals for treatment, the training of natives in agriculture, the inspection of native plantations, and innumerable duties of a general nature. In this work the Government is assisted by the various missions in the Territory.

Among the problems of native welfare facing the executive organization of the Administration, the question of depopulation probably stands first. While so much is being done in a general way to cope with the variety of factors on which welfare is dependent and to eradicate the more readily ascertainable causes of diminution, the time is ripe for a definite and comprehensive attack on the whole problem. Our District Staff includes a number of young officers, who have had the advantage of an anthropological training in the Sydney University. They are stationed in outlying parts of the Territory as Patrol Officers, and, since their work keeps them constantly in intimate touch with the people of their divisions, a great deal of valuable information should be forthcoming.

648 659 Before launching a definite programme for the treatment of the population conditions, however, we must first determine whether depopulation is actually taking place, where and to what extent it is taking place, and, if possible, why it is taking place.

What is required, therefore, is a series of demographic surveys spread over the Territory for the purpose of ascertaining the conditions of the population, locating areas where depopulation exists, and gathering data showing its extent and the factors that are contributing to it. Possible experimental restoratives should then be considered before an expensive programme of treatment is actually laid down. Once the condition in any particular area can be set out statistically in terms of causal factors, the nature and possible extent of which can be indicated to the executive organizations whose duty it is to apply practical measures, the scheme of attack could be directed along definite lines of a social, economic, religious or physiological character, according to the requirements of the campaign.

121 464 With the object of devising a concise method suitable for investigations of this nature, I visited Kavieng district early this year, and, with the approval of His Honour the Administrator, made a survey among

3: Chinnery G, E-5 (1929) 1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10

Scattered along the coast between the villages are the coco-nut plantations owned and worked by Europeans. They also appear in the list above-mentioned in capital letters. 361

During the German régime, efforts to enumerate the natives living between Kavieng and Madina were still being made in 1901-1902, and in that year the Government called a meeting of tribes, who two years before were hostile, and induced them to select chiefs to assist in local administration. Sub-districts were delineated and an enumeration was made, 5,118 people being recorded between Kavieng and Lugagun. This number did not include the forest and mountain people, as it was intended later on to amalgamate these with the coastal groups. In 1906-1907, however, the successful organization of unions between the two stocks appears to have taken place. What is meant by this is not quite clear, but, from what I gathered during the inquiry, most of the mountain people were induced to build temporary villages on the coast, and fusion between the stocks was encouraged in every possible way. Certain villages on the coast now belong to mountain people, who live in them for short intervals, and almost everywhere more or less fusion between the two stocks has taken place. 659 619 [161]

A great civilizing factor in those days was the coastal road, which in 1902-3 was extended to Fisoa, and in 1903-4 had reached Pinigindu. During 1911-12 no effort was spared to make it suitable for motor traffic. After military occupation in 1914 this road was extended to Kimaden, and during the present civil administration it has been carried on as far as Karu. Its existence has had a tremendous influence on the development of the people of the district, by whose labour, of course, it has been built and kept in repair. 491

The people of the area investigated are divided linguistically into three main groups, two coastal languages, one extending from Kavieng to Fatmilak, and one from Fatmilak to Karu, and bush languages which appear in purest form in the Limalaua group of people who live in the bush and on the coast near Fatmilak. According to information received from natives, the Kavieng-Fatmilak language is divided into the following dialectical groups:— 197

Kavieng to Losuk.
Mangai to Livitua.
Laowan to Luburua.
Lakurumau (said to be different from the others).
Munawai to Fatmilak.

The languages from Fatmilak to Karu are grouped as follow:— Limalaua (a bush language) is said to extend to Yendat and possibly to Lemo, Bimun, Panaras, Patlinger and other villages to the west.